



Standards & Assessments UPDATE

California Department of Education
Jack O'Connell, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

March 2005

Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program

One-Year Extension of Educational Testing Service (ETS) *California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)* Contract

The California Department of Education (CDE) is in the process of developing a Request for Submission (RFS) for the STAR Program for 2005-06, which will also include *CAPA* as part of the RFS. At its January meeting, the State Board of Education (SBE) therefore was asked to consider a one-year extension of the current *CAPA* contract in order to place both contracts on the same timeline.

The extension allows for developing the *CAPA* for the 2006 administration, administering the *CAPA* during the spring of 2006, reporting the 2006 results, providing districts an opportunity to correct 2006 demographic data for Academic Performance Index (API) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations, and transitioning the program to a new contractor to administer the test for spring 2007.

The SBE considered and approved extending the ETS contract for the *CAPA* for one year from January 2006 through December 31, 2006.

Receipt of Writing Test Task Force Recommendations for the Grade 4 and Grade 7 California Writing Standards Tests

The SBE was notified at its November meeting that in October 2004, ETS, at the request of

CDE and the SBE, convened the California Writing Test Task Force. The task force was comprised of English-language arts (ELA) Assessment Review Panel (ARP) members, California teachers, assessment and curriculum directors, and writing experts. The task force was charged with providing suggestions for changes to the writing assessment that included modifying the test format, scoring guides and/or processes, and/or student directions.

At its January meeting, the SBE received a number of recommendations proposed by the California Writing Test Task Force. Two of the recommendations required SBE action. The approved recommendations included field-testing new writing prompts (forty new prompts will be field tested in the fall of 2005) and changing from a two-reader scoring model to a one-reader model. These scoring changes will take effect with the 2005-06 STAR Program test cycle. CDE has already initiated and will continue to work on the additional task force recommendations.

California English Language Development Test (CELDT)

Approval of Apportionment Funding for the 2003-04 Administration of the *CELDT*

The SBE approved the district apportionment funding of \$5.00 per student for the administration of *CELDT* during the 2003-04 school year.

As a condition of receiving this funding, school districts must assess English learners as

required and agree to provide information determined to be necessary to comply with the data collection and reporting requirements of the

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) regarding English learners.

Title I Monitoring Visit

The United States Department of Education (ED) conducted a monitoring visit September 20-24, 2004 to review the CDE administration of the programs authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by NCLB. In December, the CDE received a report of findings from ED. In mid-February, a letter regarding the findings from the federal visit was mailed to district superintendents from the State Superintendent and the State Board President. It contained the following information:

Participation Rate and Students Using Out-of-level Testing or Modifications

The ED report of findings includes a requirement for calculating the **federal** Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) that the State **discontinue counting in the participation rate** those students who take the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program assessments with an out-of-level test or who require level-three accommodations (modifications) to access STAR and the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE). In other words, a special education student who is visually impaired and has the reading comprehension portion of the English-language arts assessment read to him or her (a modification) would not be counted for federal purposes as having taken the test.

Current STAR regulations end the use of out-of-level assessments after the 2004-05 testing cycle. We are **not** asking districts to alter their testing procedures for this year, since the testing window for 2004-05 has already begun and many students have Individualized Education Program (IEP) plans specifying how their assessments will be conducted this year—including the use of out-of-level assessments. We will ask the ED **not** to require California to implement the out-of-level provision until the 2005-06 testing cycle.

Current STAR and *CAHSEE* regulations allow modifications to continue to be available for special education students. The State wants to ensure a policy that encourages the maximum participation of special education students in the statewide testing program and promotes achievement at the highest possible levels for all students. We believe that allowing students with disabilities to use modifications is consistent with the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* and that the use of modifications maximizes their access to the statewide assessments. Therefore, we will request that the ED allow the State to continue to include in the participation rate those students who access the statewide assessments with modifications.

We are continuing to have discussions with the U.S. Department of Education regarding this issue. We will notify the field as soon as we have a more definitive answer.

More information...

For more information about any of the mentioned SBE items, access the SBE agenda on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag>